



## 2006 Annual Report

# MAINE JUDICIAL BRANCH

### MISSION:

To administer justice by providing a safe, accessible, efficient and impartial system of dispute resolution that serves the public interest, protects individual rights, and instills respect for the law.

### MESSAGE FROM C. J. SAUFLEY

It is a privilege to present our 2006 Annual Report, which documents substantial improvements in the State's delivery of justice. Coordinated regional scheduling in the trial courts has led to more expeditious disposition of the most urgent cases, particularly those involving families and children. Trial judges, lawyers, and court clerks have accomplished these changes through innovative work and a willingness to go the extra mile. Other initiatives have improved access to justice and increased the efficiency of the Judicial Branch, including the launch of an overdue fines collections program, identification of facilities that were not cost effective, continued consolidation of clerks' offices, and coordination of resources with other entities. Although we have much remaining to be accomplished, the successes of 2006 tell us that when the men and women of the Judicial Branch work together, great progress can be made.



DON JOHNSON PHOTO

**LEIGH I. SAUFLEY**  
Chief Justice,  
Supreme  
Judicial Court



SIMONS PHOTOGRAPHY

**JAMES "TED" GLESSNER**  
State Court  
Administrator



MARTHA MICKLES

Superior Court Chief Justice Thomas E. Humphrey,  
District Court Chief Judge John C. Nivison, and  
District Court Deputy Chief Judge Ann M. Murray

### MESSAGE FROM S.C.A. GLESSNER

In 2006, the work of the Task Force on Limited English Proficiency (LEP) led the Supreme Judicial Court to issue an Administrative Order that directs Maine's state courts to provide all LEP individuals with an interpreter, at the State's expense, at any and all court proceedings. This comprehensive provision of interpreter services is an historic milestone for Maine's Judicial Branch. Ensuring the safety of those who enter Maine's courts continues to be a high priority, and further progress was made in 2006. To more appropriately describe the law enforcement personnel who provide these services, state law was changed to give them the title of Judicial Marshals. Current allocations provide for a minimum level of staffing to ensure that at least one officer is present when a judge is in the courtroom. Although entry screening was conducted on only 6% of court days in FY'06, over 3,000 potential weapons were discovered by judicial marshals.



The Courthouses of Maine have long served as symbols of justice while functioning to meet the needs of local communities. The Aroostook County Courthouse in Houlton has served the public since 1859. It is one of the historic landmarks slated to be renovated as part of the Judicial Branch court facilities plan.

### MAINE STATE COURTS : AT A GLANCE



POPULATION SERVED .....1,305,728  
GEOGRAPHIC AREA .....35,387 sq. mi.  
COURTHOUSE LOCATIONS .....39



REVENUE .....\$42,757,587  
BUDGET .....\$55,019,028  
% of State General Fund .....1.9%



JUDGES (total) .....56  
Trial .....49  
Appellate .....7  
FAMILY LAW MAGISTRATES .....8  
STAFF (clerks, security & support) .....421



TOTAL 2006 CASES FILED .....281,006  
Supreme Judicial Court .....760  
Superior Court .....18,140  
District Court .....127,364  
Violations Bureau .....134,742

# THE COURTS OF MAINE

MARTHA MICKLES



The Supreme Judicial Court is the governing body of the Judicial Branch. Siting as the Law Court, it is the court of final appeal.

## SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT NEW CASE FILINGS

Criminal.....	231
Civil .....	292
Worker's Comp .....	94
Family/Divorce.....	102
Child Protective.....	41
TOTAL.....	760

MARTHA MICKLES



The sixteen justices of the Superior Court serve the entire state, hearing both civil and criminal cases, including jury trials.

## SUPERIOR COURT NEW CASE FILINGS

Criminal.....	14,056
Civil .....	4,084
TOTAL .....	18,140

MARTHA MICKLES



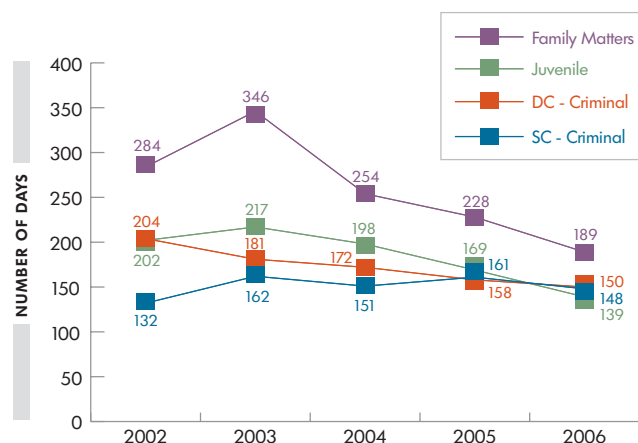
The District Court hears both civil and criminal cases, in addition to providing exclusive jurisdiction for family, juvenile, child protective, small claims, and traffic violation cases.

## DISTRICT COURT NEW CASE FILINGS

Criminal .....	59,112
Civil .....	13,125
Family/Divorce.....	9,230
Small Claims .....	9,138
Juvenile .....	4,482
Forcible Entry .....	4,488
Protection from Abuse.....	6,314
Protection from Harassment .....	4,594
Child Protective .....	665
Mental Health .....	752
Civil Violations .....	15,464
Traffic Infractions.....	134,742
TOTAL.....	262,106

## COURTS DECREASE CASE PROCESSING TIME

The new approach to coordinated regional scheduling, implemented in the trial courts in 2004, has led to significant reduction in the time it takes for the courts to dispose of the most urgent cases – those dealing with violence, children, and families. As illustrated by this graph, the average age of pending family cases has decreased significantly, from 284 days in 2002 to 189 days in 2006. This means that divorce, parental rights, and child support cases are being heard and resolved much more quickly and efficiently.



# FISCAL INFORMATION

## INCREASED COLLECTION EFFORTS PAY OFF

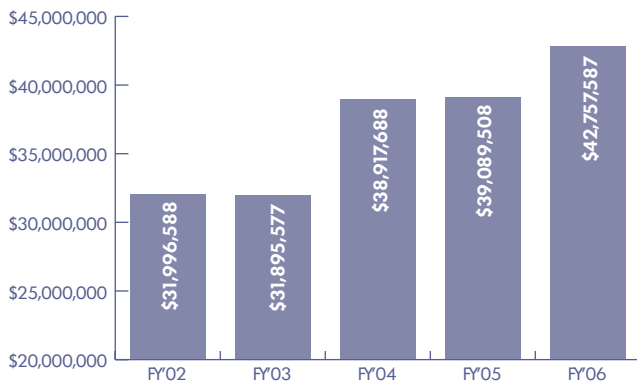
The Judicial Branch activated an aggressive collection effort to increase payment of fines in 2006. In the first eleven months of operation, over \$2.5 million in overdue fines were paid. To encourage payment, nearly 40,000 letters of demand were sent, approximately 4,000 warrants were issued, and over 3,000 licenses were suspended. In addition, local courts dedicated court time and resources to processing backlogged traffic cases, clearing the docket, and receiving fine payments.



People who had received a traffic summons stand in line in Ellsworth District Court to talk with Assistant District Attorney Mary Kellett (far left, green dress) about their cases during the traffic court blitz.

BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY KEVIN BENNETT

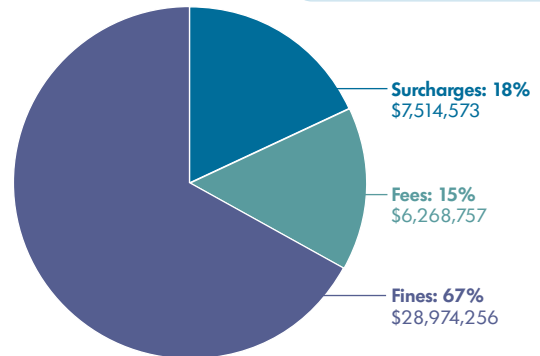
## REVENUE COLLECTED by the Judicial Branch



FY'06 revenue collection was the greatest ever, **34% higher than 5 years ago, and nearly 10% greater than last year.** The General Fund received 83% of the FY'06 revenue, \$35,382,602. The rest was dedicated to several other departments and agencies, as required by statute.

## Judicial Branch REVENUE BY TYPE, FY '06

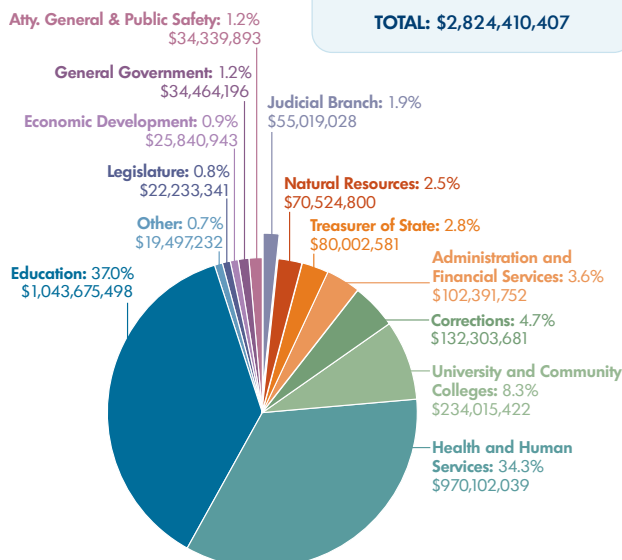
TOTAL: \$42,757,587



About 2/3rds of FY'06 revenue came from payment of civil and criminal fines. Surcharges are assessed in addition to fines, and are dedicated to the general fund, county jail operations, law enforcement education, and civil legal services.

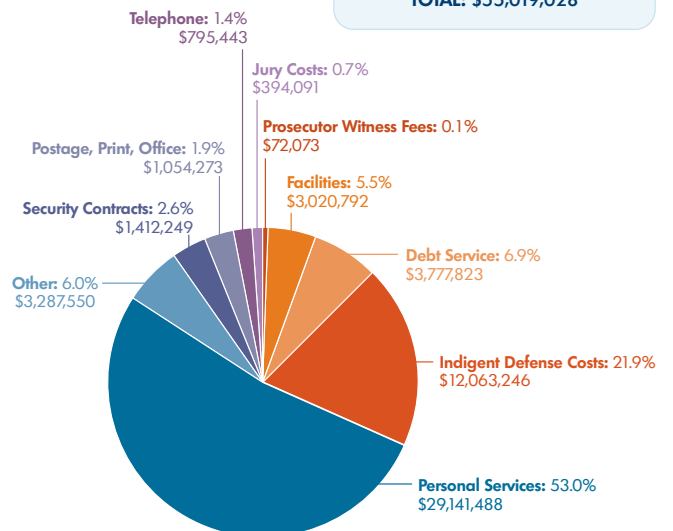
## Statewide GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES, FY '06

TOTAL: \$2,824,410,407



## Judicial Branch GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES, FY '06

TOTAL: \$55,019,028



# INITIATIVES

## VIDEO TECHNOLOGY INCREASES EFFICIENCY & SECURITY

Throughout 2006, the Judicial Branch established and expanded the use of video technology across the state to a total of twenty-two courts and offices. Court locations in Kennebec, Aroostook, and York counties are using the system for arraignments of defendants, reducing the costs and risks for counties as well as the state. Mental Health hearings are conducted via video in Lewiston and Portland. The technology also allows for expert witnesses to testify from a distance, significantly reducing expenses to litigants.

Judge Vendean V. Vafiades (right) addresses a defendant who is televised from Kennebec County Jail, during a video arraignment in Augusta District Court.



BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY BRIDGET BROWN



In 2006, Maine's INTERBRANCH FORUM included (l to r) House Minority Leader Rep. David E. Bowles; Assistant Minority Leader Sen. Carol Weston; Gov. John E. Baldacci; Chief Justice Leigh I. Saulley; President of the Senate Beth Edmonds; and Speaker of the House John Richardson.

## THREE BRANCHES SERVE MAINE'S CITIZENS

Communication, understanding, and cooperation amongst the three branches of government are the roots that support delivery of justice to Maine's citizens. Throughout 2006, bi-partisan support from the Legislature and Governor enabled better access to justice and increased safety in the courts. The courts welcome legislators, as well as citizens and students, to observe courts in session so that they can gain an understanding of the daily work of the Judicial Branch.

In 2006, the establishment of the **Business and Consumer Docket** became a priority for improving delivery of justice in Maine. Gov. Baldacci and the members of the 122nd Maine Legislature supported the creation of a specialized docket for business and consumer cases, and allocated substantial resources, including four new judgeships.

## LAW COURT GOES ON THE ROAD TO EDUCATE

To provide the public with more insight into the workings of Maine's highest court, the Supreme Judicial Court held actual Law Court sessions in South Portland, Lewiston, and Bangor. The Court was invited to hear oral arguments in local high schools by Representative Jane Eberle (South Portland/Cape Elizabeth) and Senator Peggy Rotundo (Androscoggin). Teachers developed educational materials and lessons to prepare students for the experience. Approximately 100 adult students enrolled in the Penobscot Valley Senior College class, "Not Your Grandfather's Judicial System," taught by retired Justice Paul Rudman, were joined by area high school and college students to observe oral arguments held in Bangor.



The seven justices of the Supreme Judicial Court in session at South Portland High School.

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD PHOTO BY JOHN EWING

## ORGANIZING TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Domestic Violence Case Coordination Projects** are designed to address gaps and barriers in the domestic violence justice system. The projects operate in the Portland, York, Springvale, Skowhegan and Waterville District Courts, and were expanded to Lewiston and Augusta in 2006.

As one of their probation conditions, defendants who are convicted of a domestic violence crime are ordered to attend periodic reviews before a judge. During FY'06, there were 684 defendants

subject to judicial monitoring and there were 1,766 review hearings conducted.

The projects are funded by federal grants from the Stop Violence Against Women Act. Over the next two years, the grants will provide resources so that criminal cases involving domestic violence can be tracked in a statewide information system. Also, a study of risk assessment tools designed to guide probation officers to provide adequate supervision over domestic offenders will be conducted.

## COURTS TAKE STEPS TO ADDRESS COMPLICATED ISSUES

### Drug Treatment and Alternative Sentencing Courts

Maine's **Adult Drug Treatment Courts** operate in five counties: York, Cumberland, Androscoggin, Penobscot, and Washington. Drug treatment courts focus on a collaborative, multi-disciplinary, problem-solving approach, working closely with the services available in the community. Each program utilizes strict judicial monitoring, frequent and random drug and alcohol testing, intensive group and individual treatment, a variety of positive and negative consequences to encourage program compliance, as well as case management services to accomplish the goals of recovery and modified behaviors.

**Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts** are part of the District Courts in Augusta, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, and West Bath. The juvenile program seeks to increase the young person's accountability, build a stronger family unit, and help juveniles become responsible community members. Defendants who do not participate satisfactorily have to serve their sentences. Those who do succeed experience great personal benefit and have the chance to be productive citizens of Maine.



Justice Roland Cole applauds the success of an adult drug court participant in Cumberland County Superior Court.

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD PHOTO BY JACK MILTON



Jim Everly of Trenton works as an auto body specialist in Bass Harbor. Everly was the first graduate of the Hancock County Deferred Sentencing Project.

**Family Drug Treatment Courts** provide hope for families in crisis in the child protection system. Parents progress toward reunification with their children. Often, families involved in the family drug court would have little chance for building a functioning family without the services and oversight of the drug court. The focus and direction of the family drug court make a real difference for families whose children have been affected by the drug or alcohol problems of their parents. Currently, family drug courts are available in Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Kennebec, and Androscoggin counties.

In Hancock County, citizens initiated an alternative that offers treatment and support to defendants. When limitations in funding prevented the expansion of the official drug court model, local citizens, working with leadership from the DA's office, law enforcement, defense attorneys, and community counselors created the "**Hancock County Deferred Sentencing Project**" to address a growing substance abuse problem in that county.

### CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS COURT ADDRESSES MENTAL ILLNESS & SUBSTANCE ABUSE

On September 29, 2006, the Co-Occurring Disorders Court honored its first two graduates with a ceremony in the main courtroom of the Kennebec County Superior Court. Both graduates succeeded in spite of significant challenges. One, at age 59, has been reunited with his wife and daughter, and cares for his elderly mother. The other graduate lives with his mother and young daughter, and is working toward a degree at the University of Maine in Augusta.

The CODC opened in June 2005. Initially, planning and operation of the CODC took place without additional funding. In the fall of 2005, the CODC was awarded a three-year, \$500,000 grant from the Department of Justice, which was used to fund a full-time case manager. The CODC has yet to request funding from the Maine Legislature.

Participation in the court requires a mental health diagnosis and a co-occurring substance abuse problem. Upon admission to the court, the defendants are connected to the resources they need to succeed, including housing, insurance, financial support, treatment, medicine, encouragement and support from the team, case management, and, if appropriate, a job or further schooling. All defendants meet with Justice Mills each week to discuss their progress.



On behalf of the Kennebec County Co-Occurring Disorders Court, the Hon. Nancy Mills awards a plaque to Crisis and Counseling Centers, Inc., as the treatment provider agency of the year.

BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY GABOR DEGRE

# COURT REGIONS AND CASES FILED

## REGION #5 Total: 19,532

### PENOBSCOT

Bangor Superior ..... 1,530  
Bangor District ..... 11,044  
Newport District ..... 2,619  
Lincoln District ..... 1,352  
Millinocket District ..... 1,084

### PISCATAQUIS

Dover-Foxcroft Superior .... 116  
Dover-Foxcroft District ..... 1,787

## REGION #4 Total: 20,288

### SOMERSET

Skowhegan Superior ..... 623  
Skowhegan District ..... 5,324

### KENNEBEC

Augusta Superior ..... 1,579  
Augusta District ..... 6,615  
Waterville District ..... 6,147

## REGION #3 Total: 22,194

### FRANKLIN

Farmington Superior ..... 480  
Farmington District ..... 3,036

### OXFORD

South Paris Superior ..... 744  
South Paris District ..... 2,563  
Rumford District ..... 2,310

### ANDROSCOGGIN

Auburn Superior ..... 1,640  
Lewiston District ..... 11,421

## REGION #2 Total: 27,149

### CUMBERLAND

Portland Superior ..... 4,262  
Portland District ..... 19,489  
Bridgton District ..... 3,398

## REGION #1 Total: 22,579

### YORK

Alfred Superior ..... 3,394  
Biddeford District ..... 9,326  
Springvale District ..... 5,533  
York District ..... 4,326

## REGION #8 Total: 8,295

### AROOSTOOK

Caribou/Houlton Superior .. 904  
Caribou District ..... 1,498  
Houlton District ..... 1,606  
Presque Isle District ..... 2,497  
Fort Kent District ..... 1,484  
Madawaska District ..... 306

## REGION #7 Total: 9,434

### HANCOCK

Ellsworth Superior ..... 541  
Ellsworth District ..... 5,101

### WASHINGTON

Machias Superior ..... 420  
Machias District ..... 1,861  
Calais District ..... 1,511

## REGION #6 Total: 16,033

### WALDO

Belfast Superior ..... 399  
Belfast District ..... 2,792

### KNOX

Rockland Superior ..... 696  
Rockland District ..... 3,780

### LINCOLN

Wiscasset Superior ..... 477  
Wiscasset District ..... 2,364

### SAGadahoc

Bath Superior ..... 335  
West Bath District ..... 5,190

## KEY

- District Court
- Superior Court
- ▲ District and Superior Courts in the same city/town

Counties grouped together by color are part of a single court REGION, where resources and scheduling are coordinated.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit the Court's web page at [www.courts.state.me.us](http://www.courts.state.me.us) where you'll find:

- **PUBLICATIONS:** *A Guide to Small Claims* • *A Guide to Protection from Abuse and Harassment* • *Citizens Guide to the Courts* • *Child Protective Handbooks*
- **INFORMATION** about court proceedings and offices
- **LINKS** to legal resources, volunteer opportunities, court rules, forms, opinions

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

PO Box 4820  
Portland, ME 04112-4820  
(207) 822-0792  
(207) 822-0701 (TTY)

## TRAFFIC INFRACTIONS

Total: 134,742